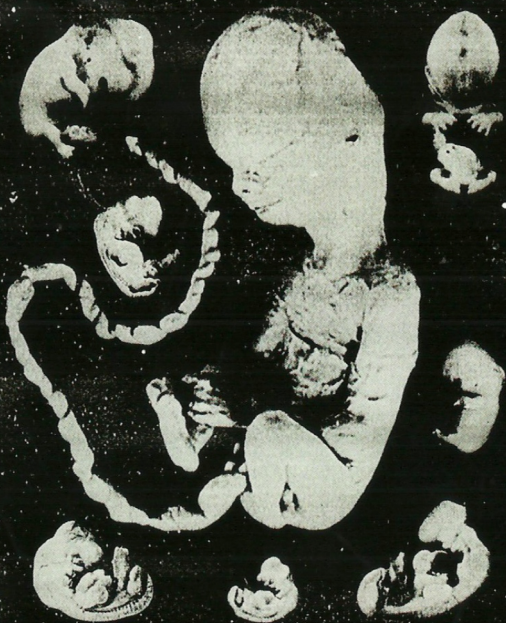


EMBRYO

ISSUE #4



- VOICE OF A FAILED SPECIES -

GRAVE - JT WHITFIELD

DEATHBED TAPES - MINDSEYERECORDS.XYZ

PRIMITIVE KNOT - CONRAD PACK - JED BINDEMAN

DJ SPEEDSICK - FELIPE TAVEIRA

EMBRYO

- VOICE OF A FAILED SPECIES -

People of the music industry, you're now reading the fourth issue of Embryo Magazine brought to you by Natural Sciences Recs in Manchester.

Usually here we breakdown the stage in which this issue was set. With the world even more messed up than the last issue (and showing no signs of changing), the latest appetiser to add onto the menu of despair is the encroaching bed bug infestation. Not only that, but mutated blood suckers from the third circle of hell, with a sniper-focus on terrorising touring DJ's, "influencers" and estate agents from suburb to suburb as they kick back and line themselves up for the midnight buffet platter.

But it isn't all doom and gloom. For the crews, labels and artists represented in these pages, this co-habitation ain't no deal. From sharing squat parties, noise houses to confined to small apartments with a stack of J-cards, these hard-shelled invertebrates represent the constant irritation of the underground against the scab of wider society. A pipe-dream perhaps, but one we'll be clinging on to for dear life over the forthcoming months. Stock up on those vacuum seal bags and prepare to burn this whole damn place to the ground. Hail!

In the meantime, inside issue 4 you'll find interview with terror rap from Crave, Jed Bindeman's nerd out on under-the-underground tapes, Chondric Sound / LIES affiliate JT Whitefield on Austin and touring stimulants. There's also a label profile with Alex from Deathbed tapes (who also designed the cover), UK online record store Mindseye.xyz and a scene check with DJ Speedsick and United Selector Network who are representing the free party scenes, through inclusive events and fringe art from the mid-west to California.

We round off the issue with a special lathe cut 7" from the 80's Swedish tape scene by Birth Control, with this cut Fårgar a freaked out acid wave cut from an impossible to find tape that has never been reissued (props to Tor, Beau Wanzer and Lathe to the Grave on that one). There's also a killer UFO techno mix from Conrad Pack. Respect!

Alex Hall

ISSUE #4

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CRAVE

JED BINDEMAN

DEATHBED
TAPES

JT WHITEFIELD

MINDSEYE RECORDS

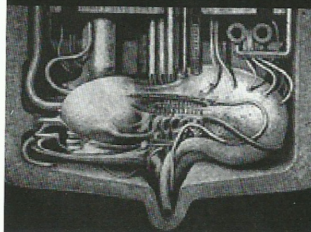
DJ SPEEDSICK

FELIPE TAVEIRA

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Credits

Cover Art: Alex Deathbed Tapes
Conrad Pack Embryo Mix
7" by Birth Control
Words and Layout by Alex Hall



CONRAD PACK

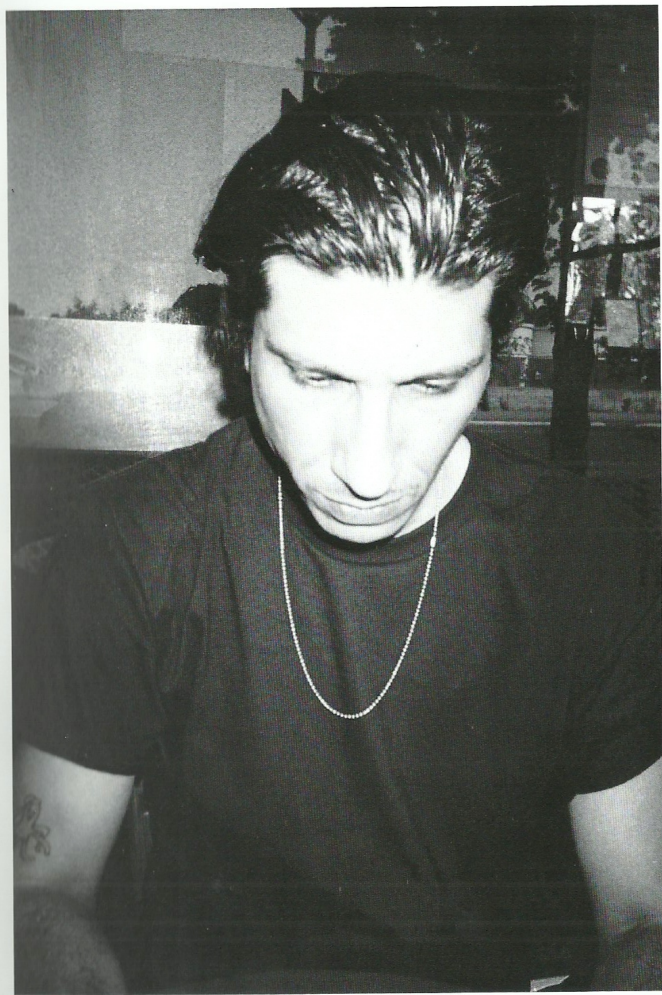


EMBRYO MIX

Embryo #4 comes with a mix from Conrad Pack with a rolling 60 mins of UFO techno and some slamming unreleased productions. Zero canyfloos. Check that Apocalypse Now jam at the end. Kill or be killed

< Scan the QR code >





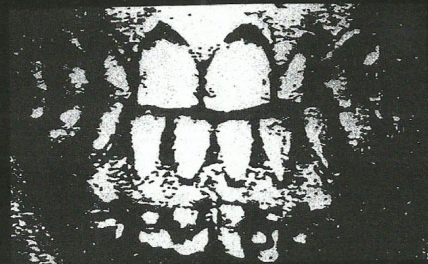
CRAVE INNER WAR DELIRIUM

What's up John - big ups on the new Crave record, heavy stuff. Can you tell us what you were aiming for with it? It seems like it delves into AI, inner dread, and it's musically dense as hell. What were you thinking at the time of recording?

Thank you! I started recording this project a few weeks before the lockdown in Paris during the pandemic and finished it in 2022 while in isolation in the woods. Witnessed personal loss and I was my worst enemy during that time. This project helped me channel that whole negative vibe into something productive and transformed me into a better version of myself. That was my primary goal, and I believe I achieved it.

Arlen, who runs Heat Crimes and half of Nyege Nyege Tapes, approached me, when I finished the album and we set a deal to release the record.

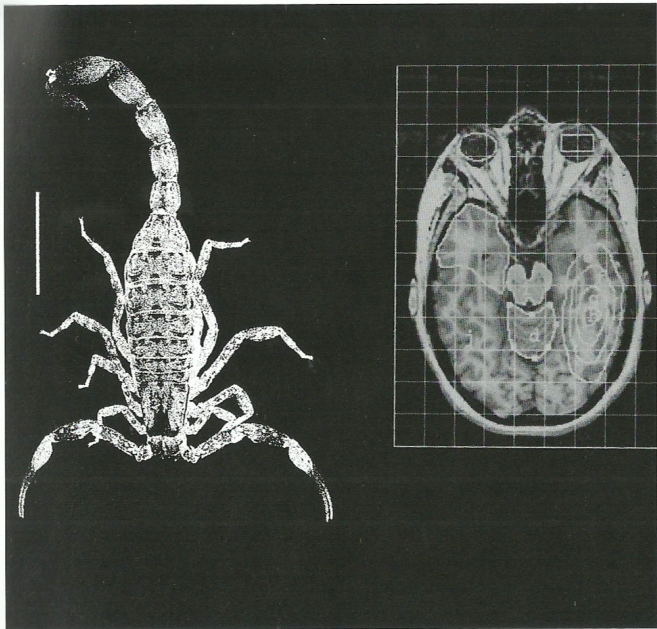
PASO INFERIOR



Regarding the album's construction, my initial inspiration stemmed from the structure and organization of Japanese Hell, notably the movie "Jigoku" by Nobuo Nakagawa. I aimed to craft an album that would make listeners feel as disoriented as reading "House of Leaves" by Mark Z. Danielewski.

Mixing modern rap beats with cathartic textures and feedbacks posed a central challenge and pillar of the project.

The first track that started it all was "Backdraft," originally recorded in 2017-2018. I recorded the first version of "Backdraft" in my car, at a resting area in front of the highway. It was a moment when I had nowhere else to go. I kept this process for every single track, and there are many stories behind all the tracks that have now evolved into what they are today. This method was crucial in filling the lack of spontaneity. During a four-year period, I created numerous versions for each track, totaling about 10 to 12 versions per song.



In "IWD," I performed with different types of voices for a specific reason. Each voice represents a different psyche, each voice lives in a different space, and each is a different "I" evolving in a delirious ecosystem. Sometimes it's night, sometimes you're out, sometimes it's raining, sometimes in my car trunk, and then left alive in the woods.

The whole album was created this way, by recording sounds from present moments and atmospheres. The album's sounds were captured from various moments, rooms, spaces and atmospheres, ranging from simple hisses to more complex elements like my chainsaw.

How would you describe the music you make? There's all sorts in there from noise, industrial, southern rap and your own crazy flavors in there. What records were you checking out around that time?

I used to describe it as screwed-electronics, it's kind of that in the process.

I always destroy my own tracks and beats over and over by depicting, add some raw noise/power-electronics textures recorded the old way and then I try more and more to have a modern approach with the mix.



But I'm starting to get a tired of this and already started working on my new sound.

At the time i was checking a lot of music actually. Mainly stuck on Geinoh Yamashirogumi's albums in loop, GRIM "Message" and 'Vital' albums, Akira Yamaoka, Thomas Koner, Chu Ishikawa, Aaron Dilloway, Anenzephalia, Death Pile, some old school dungeon synth like Xantotol, Memphis rap sigils classics from Children of The Corn and Crucifix "Da Clouds In Me"

Are there plans to take this record on the road? What's your live setup?

I have a few shows planned, and my live setup is quite straightforward. A sampler, a mixer, a couple of effects units, an amplifier, two microphones and a thick layer of smoke inside the room.

Your discography is also extensive and divided among several aliases - Sniper Bait, Lieu Noir, Soul Collector, Jonny Teardrop, Paso Inferior, and possibly others. Is this intentional, to maintain an air of elusiveness? Can you explain the main differences between these monikers?

I do maintain several monikers, and it's not about being elusive but more about seeking different creative perspectives. Each project represents a distinct creative outlet for me. Think of it like buying a piece of land with no preexisting rules, laws, or structures, or physics and you have the power to shape it as you wish with your own skills. Some projects might feel like building untameable chaos, while others come unexpectedly alive within the parameters you've set. I see failure as an opportunity, and it multiplies creativity and weird shit.



Can you elaborate on the main projects you're currently working on?

Crave and Sniper Bait are my two primary projects at the moment. I view Sniper Bait as a sort of refuge, even like a stash when I need a break from other projects. There's more space with SB. Whenever I seek a fresh perspective, I begin a new project under a new moniker.

In a way Crave, Soul Collector and now nevada_jerky_gurl23 coexist and progress within the domain of Sniper Bait.

It sounds like there's a deeper connection between your monikers and projects. Can you explain more?

Absolutely, there are various levels of interconnectedness among my monikers and projects. For example, I can incorporate the exact same sounds, such as a field recording of crickets, into both Crave and Sniper Bait tracks. This serves to illustrate that these projects share a moment but offer distinct perspectives. It's something I've been working on and plan to incorporate more and more. I am consistently working to improve this side of the process.

Around seven years ago, I conceptualized a mental map of a motel, complete with different rooms spanning two floors, each housing its own unique stories. Initially, this concept was meant to result in one EP or album per room. However, my perspective underwent a shift when I went in California/Nevada. I reimagined this motel map as a fictional town, which led to the release of "Save Room Part 1." Each track in this project is named after a place or location, inspired by my visit to a place called Hinkley in the Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County, California. Hinkley is a unique, almost deserted place, with mostly impoverished residents holding on against all odds. I've been there at night from Vegas, and it was a risky experience. I mention this to highlight how far I go to link my monikers and projects together. In fact, Hinkley's groundwater contamination served as the inspiration for "Save Room Part 1."

A few months ago, I recorded a Sniper Bait album inspired by the Pepcon Disaster in Clark County in the 1980s, Nevada. It should be released in 2024, and these projects are somehow interconnected, using the same landscapes to tell different stories from varying perspectives.

You've created a unique universe with your monikers and projects. Can you tell us more about how this creative process has influenced your work?

It's like building the physics of a world where each project and album finds its specific place, much like characters in a story. Every album or EP occupies a distinct corner on this map, while simultaneously, a different narrative unfolds in another part. This method not only fuels quick and vivid idea generation but also immerses me in multiple mindsets, instilling a kind of profound confidence in my recording process to avoid looking back and overthinking.

A few months ago, I recorded a Sniper Bait album inspired by the Pepcon Disaster in Clark County in the 1980s, Nevada. It should be released in 2024, and these projects are somehow interconnected, using the same landscapes to tell different stories from varying perspectives.

We collaborated as Lieu Noir and then there was a break before starting the next Sniper Bait record, during which you've been incredibly productive. Can you share what you were up to in those intervening years?

During that break, I was in a bad mind set for various reasons. I struggled to finish my tracks, creating hundreds of them compulsively, always feeling they needed more adjustments. However, I've since realized that a track is never truly finished until you have decided it is. Today, I have a vast pool of material that I recycle, combined with the knowledge I gained, especially after "Stabbed in the Jaw and left alive." This allowed me to bring to fruition ideas I had long held onto. Sniper Bait is essentially an evolved version of Lieu Noir.

Wanna go back to the beginning here if that's alright. Could you set the scene where you grew up, how you started getting into underground music? Were there any gigs or shows from when you were starting out that had a big influence on your roots into this thing?

I grew up in a calm town surrounded with forest. A hole in the suburbs. In fall and winter seasons it's very foggy there turning it into my own real-life Silent Hill experience.

When i was 6 or 7 my brother used to take me to his rehearsals with his metal band 'cause he couldn't leave me alone at home. he was a teenager, had a metal band. My love for metal started around that time with Sepultura. Chaos AD was the first song i've learned by heart. haha

Later I started assembling music when i was around 15-16 years old with Acid soundforge, reaktor, samples. learning guitar and i was into noinput mixing by accident.

I think a show that truly blew my mind was a gig at Loophole in Berlin in 2011-2012 with Sewn Leather, Dj Dog Dick and Marcel DuSwamp. It was back when i was living there and we had a show that same night. Griffin's rap-industrial-harsh-hiphop sound was incredible live. Nobody was doing that!
My perspective on music changed after that night.

What's your perspective on French music and the underground scene there as a whole?

Here the necessity for greater collaboration between artists and promoters, rather than working in opposition behind the scenes is crucial. I choosed to distance myself from this environment. It's not that I don't appreciate certain French artists; it's simply that I've lost interest in the prevailing mindset, which I find repulsive. Perhaps my perspective will evolve in the future.

It seems like you're constantly working on new projects and managing Paso Inferior's clothing line. Is staying consistently busy a necessity in the underground scene today? Is this your full-time focus?

Staying constantly engaged in creative work is crucial for me. It helps me evolve and avoid falling into self-destructive patterns. This is why I utilize different monikers; it enables me to immerse myself in diverse spaces. The ability to swiftly switch mindsets has been one of the most valuable skills I've cultivated over the years. It's challenging but requires discipline to do so without losing direction. I started my brand Paso Inferior out of necessity during the pandemic. I'd hit rock bottom, lost my music studio, apartment, witnessed personal loss, and decided to leave my job to start anew. With just a couple of hundred dollars, I invested in gear and blank shirts, never looking back. Despite having no knowledge of screenprinting, I trusted my instincts, took the leap, and it clicked. The main idea was to bring back music references -and not just music- that i love. Bootlegs of references that I couldn't find online. That's why i made this rotten.com shirt actually. I wanted one and now it's Paso's classic i think!

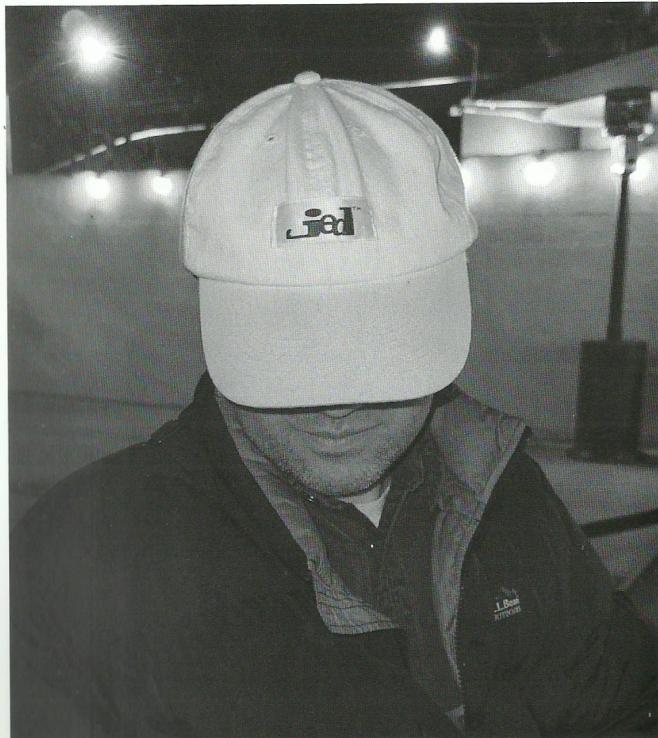
Now with my brand i'm less and less focus on bootlegs simply because the market has become saturated with it, today it makes no more sense to me and it was never the plan to make just bootlegs to begin with. Now, I'm evolving towards a more personalized approach and designs which sometimes complements my music releases and offers a deeper perspective on the themes I explore in my sound projects and all the researches that surrounds my work in general.



Finally let me know what you've got coming and some other releases you've been checking out

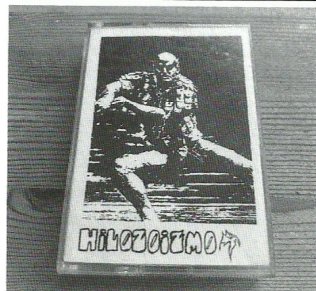
I have four upcoming releases, with two albums on Heat Crimes, one on Natural Sciences, and a lathe cut on my own imprint, PIT.

JED BINDEMAN
SUB-UNDERGROUND OBSESSION



Over the years I've come to accept an indisputable fact: I have an unhealthy obsession with weird, sub-underground tapes. Once the floodgates opened, it was impossible to close them, as the second I think I've got a grasp on the world of DIY tapes, 100 more discoveries (mostly terrible, some incredibly good and inspiring) plop down into my lap to overwhelm the senses all over again. My tastes vary widely, as I tend to go through phases where all I want to listen to is bizarre, wackadood shit, then I get sick of it and want to hear nothing but lo-fi pop tunes, then that starts to irritate me to no end, and on and on the cycle goes. This small selection here is a good example of some favorites of mine that haven't gotten much (any?) attention elsewhere, and that I feel deserve to have a little spotlight thrust in their greasy faces.

Hilozoizmo -En Vivo 81, self-release, 1981



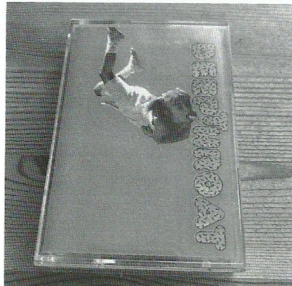
Along with Oaxomaxoma and Voldarepet, Hilozoizmo were one of the first Mexican groups to work strictly with experimental sounds. There's lots of scraping and droning, but things begin to coalesce into more musical terrain as the tape continues, with repetitive string strumming, plonking mallets and ominous sounding reeds. A wonderful early release from one of my favorite "scenes."

C.Allen Parker - Dark Rituals, Olea Artistries, 1985



Head scratchingly bizarre tape from Salt Lake City, this thing goes all over the place from ritual industrial (as the titles suggest), but also touching down on some majorly damaged acid folk, with mumbled vocals, strummed acoustic guitars and massive layers of synths and noise piled on top. Uhhhh what the hell is this thing?

Celibate Genitalia - Deepthroat, CTE, 1988



Alienatingly minimal "techno"/ industrial from these mysterious Mancunians. It's hard to imagine, but word is that there was an unrealized plan for these freaks to release a collaboration with 808 State. Now THAT'S something I would have liked to hear! I have about 7-8 tapes on the label CTE and every one of them is a total "huh?"

Musica Automatika - Dedicado a Ampolle, self-released, 1978



Drifting and organic feeling Argentinian electro-acoustics from way back in 1978 (!?). I much prefer this tape to their proper LP, which was a lot more abstract. Some of the sounds on here bring to mind Jon Hassell at his best, or even mid period O Yuki Conjugate. Very engaging and consistently exciting.

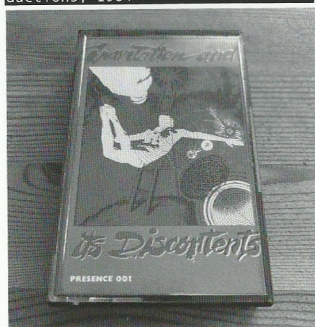
Kicking Giant - untitled, self-released, 1989



I'd never been much of a Kicking Giant fan over the years, but when this tape (which I later found out was "released" in an edition of one copy!) plopped into my lap it was a total game changer. Fried to the absolute max lo-fi folk/pop/noise, with sad eyed vocals and beautiful melodies clashing against layers of feedback guitar and what sounds like kitchen utensils being banged against pots and pans. Somehow it all works perfectly.



David Myers - Gravitation and its Discontents, Presence Sound Productions, 1984



A pre-Arcane Device release from Myers, sounding waaaaay different from the feedback driven work that he would soon dedicate himself to. This first release of his swims in the same waters as Richard Pinhas and Heldon, with rich and deep arpeggiated synths swirling around, along with machine rhythms and guitars acting as counterpoint. Very hi-fi (especially for a home recording) and truly excellent in every way, from the music down to the artwork and tape labels.





DEATHBED TAPES

THIS CONTENT YOU MAY FIND SHOCKING



Okay Alex, where are you based and what's a normal day look like for you and the runnings of the label. Set it out for us.

I'm in Piqua, Ohio - about 30 minutes north of Dayton. The label keeps me pretty busy. On an average day I'm spending a few hours in the morning answering messages, packing orders, assembling tapes. Then I try to work on something creative. Usually art for an upcoming release, or the occasional art commission. I have a studio in my basement where I spend most of my time. I'm usually down there making art or music or watching sleazy VHS tapes.

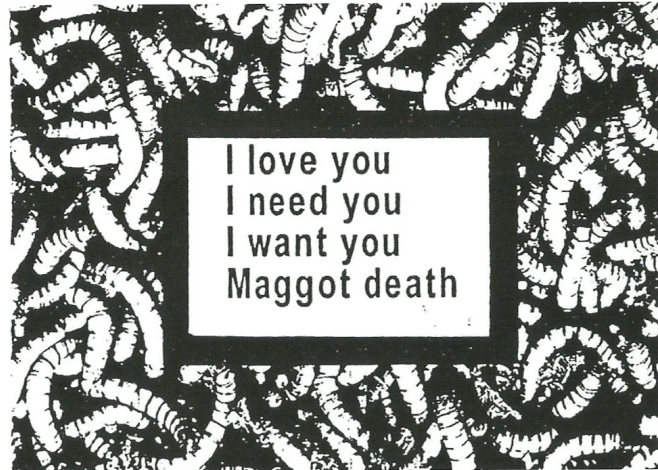
Alright let's get to the root of the problem. Could you set up how you got involved in underground music and down the path of EXTREME EXPERIMENTAL gs of the label. Set it out for us.

I discovered noise in 2010. It was Masonna, Whitehouse, Throbbing Gristle, Coil, Godflesh, Swans, SPK. Then a couple years later it became Breathing Problem, Plague Mother, Aaron Dilloway, Black Leather Jesus, Incapacitants, Merzbow, etc.

I bought a shaker box in 2012 and started experimenting. Most of my stuff back then was based on feedback loops, but I wasn't recording anything. Then I went to Amplified Humans festival in 2016 and started meeting people in the scene and getting involved.

Checking out the sprawl of releases on your bandcamp, the first was in 2018 - is that when the label started with the begravd tape? What made you get this thing going?

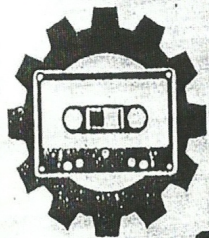
Yeah, I pitched that begravd release to a few labels and eventually decided to release it myself. At the time I had no idea "self releasing" was a thing, I thought everything needed to have a label attached so I came up with the name Deathbed Tapes. I didn't expect it to turn into anything.



Could be wrong here, but it feels like you do much of the running of the label from your house and make up the artwork etc from there? DIY in the true sense of the word. Presume that approach is important to you?

Yeah, I usually do everything myself. Most of the tapes are pro-dubbed, but some of them are dubbed on my Tascams. I do all the assembly myself. The scoring, cutting, folding, sticker labels, all of that. This approach is essential, I couldn't afford to pay someone else to do the work. But even if I could, I'd probably still do it myself. This is what I live for.

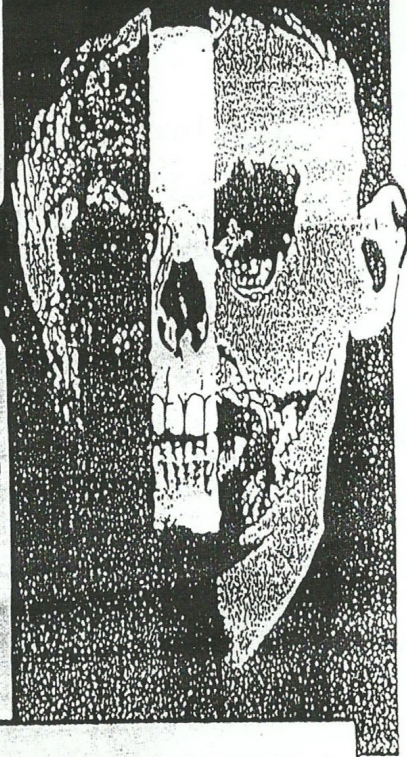
DEATHBED TAPES



TO AVOID
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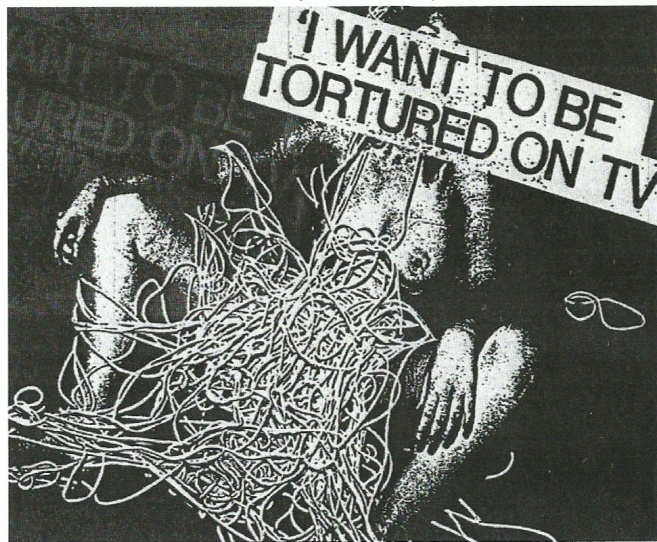
WARNING

THE CONTENTS OF THESE TAPES MAY BE FOUND SHOCKING
AND DISTURBING. IF DEPICTIONS OF DEATH UPSET YOU,
PLEASE DO NOT LISTEN.



Do you do the label full time? How easy is that to make work? If not, what's the side hustle?

Kind of. It takes full time hours but it doesn't pay a full time wage. No where near it. But I live a very simple life - mostly due to a back injury which has made it difficult to get around. The side hustle is buying and reselling stuff. Chairs, lamps, antiques, t-shirts, VHS tapes, stuff like that - that's what I was doing full time before I started the label. I buy a lot more than I sell. It's hard not to keep the coolest items. Doing art commissions is another side hustle. I design t-shirts, flyers, album covers, etc.



Could you talk us through the equipment you put out too? What's the process of putting them together, from the sound to the mechanisms?

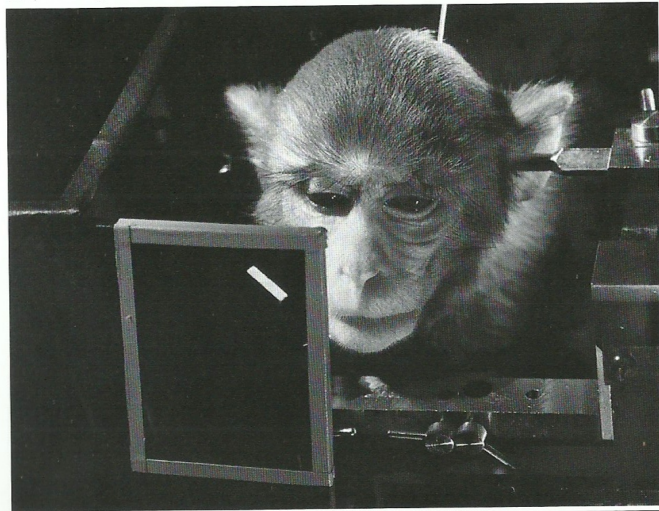
I started collaborating with pedal builders in 2019. It started with the Screaming Baby synths, then I did some Gristleizers and Wasp Filters with MSL, then the Electro Lobotomy x Deathbed Hadron Colliders. Brandon from Abrasive Industries makes the Deathbed "Death Rattle" shaker boxes, but those have been out of stock for a while. I'm currently working with Adam from Copilot fx. I found Adam when I was looking for a White Noise Generator pedal and the only decent one I found was built by him. He builds the Deathbed Great White Death Machine (WNG), the Strangulator Distortions, the Maggot Death Filters, and the Hellbent Noise Synths. Next will be an octave pedal, and then a deluxe WNG. I tell him what I want and he builds a prototype. Usually there are a couple tweaks, and then they go into production.

What's the major pain in your ass with running a label in 2023? What do you see as the wider problems with the "industry" at large.

I don't sell many tapes unless I'm working with a big artist - which is rare. The biggest pains are financial. I always have most of my money sunk into inventory. It's also a pain getting decent blank tapes for a fair price. And I get about a dozen submissions a day now. My e-mail address has ended up on some lists or something. Most of them aren't noise or even close.

We have a split release with the new Primitive Knot tape. Part of the reason for starting Embryo was to open up some dialogue between different labels / artists and help each other where we can - do you feel the underground is missing this, or should it remain more dog-eat-dog?

I have great friendships with a lot of labels, distros, and artists. I love when people who are getting started ask me questions, I'm always happy to help and give advice. I've seen a lot of dog-eat-dog types come and go. I'm not competitive at all - I can understand why people would be that way, but for me the community plays a big part. I make an effort to work with newcomers (especially international) and try to bring attention to cool new projects.



From a purely label-perspective, I'm curious about why you release in batches? It wasn't something that crossed my mind before, but makes sense with the fucked up shipping costs etc. is that why?

I did weekly releases for a really long time. I got really used to that format, and it became a comfortable routine. But I think my diehard customers got tired of paying \$5 shipping once a week. Now I do monthly batches of 4 tapes or more, so I'm putting out the same amount of releases but it's a lot less work and more affordable for the listeners.

I've also seen you collect old medical photos and gnarly documents like that. What's your best haul? Where do you usually find this stuff? We recently came across a 70's straight jacket in a thrift store.

I'm jealous! I still don't have one. I've been checking my local Goodwill's Halloween section for stuff like that. I've been finding some cool leather jackets, leather pants and a lot of military jackets. Stuff to resell but not much to keep - at least from this year's hunts. As far as my best hauls, I've found a few 50s/60s Levis items. Those are always a good chunk of change. I bought 2 lamps for \$25 and sold them for \$1,400 a couple years ago. My local thrift store has 10 for a dollar VHS tapes and I've sold quite a few in the \$200-300 range. Talking about it makes me feel like I'm bragging, but I'm just trying to survive. I collect lots of stuff. Photos (dead bodies and old surgical photos mostly), funeral notices and other funeral items, mon-do VHS tapes, tribal masks, bondage masks, human skulls, army jackets, crime mags, bondage mags, war mags, old tabloids. I recently got a great deal on a huge collection of 80s/90s British zines. Lots of industrial and mail art stuff in there.

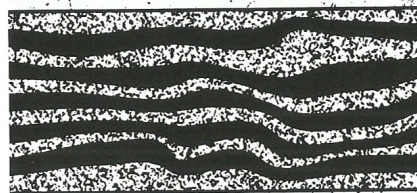
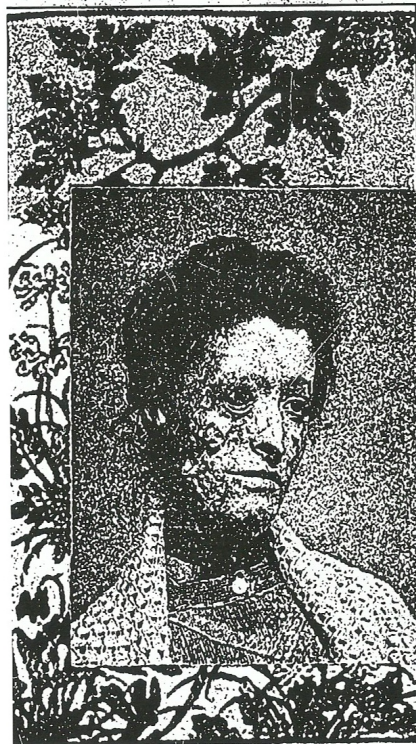


Okay I've wasted enough of your time, so to finish, could you recommend three non- Deathbed Releases and three from the label?

I've had Skinny Puppy - Bites on repeat lately. 10/10 album. I've been revisiting my Deadline Recordings collection the last few weeks. The MSBR splits and collabs are some of my favorites. Today I've been listening to some Black Mountain Transmitter. I wish I could make music like that! Some recent Deathbed gems... Body Plan - Neuroperverse, Cromlech - Executive Summary, or check out the latest release from my personal project, Torment Alter - Snuffed Out.



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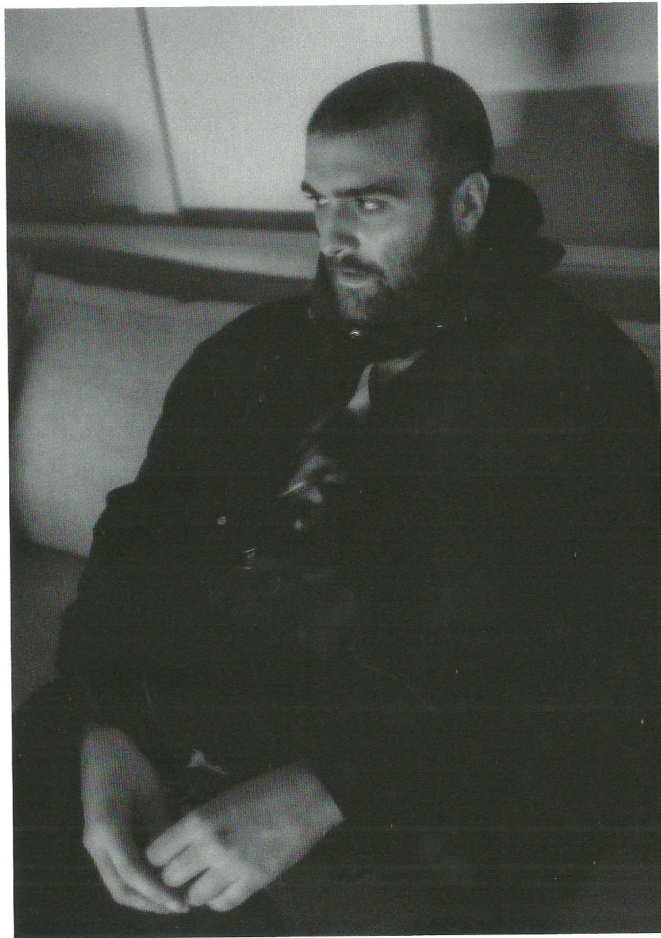


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JT WHITFIELD
AUSTIN TRASHWARE



Embryo's been following your work from releases on L.I.E.S., Clandestine and Chondritic Sound, but there's little else about, do you like doing interviews or something to avoid?

To be honest, this is my 3rd interview. One of the other two was for the Noise Extra podcasts "trashware" segment which we discussed gear only. Not sure if that counts as an interview? The other interview I did never got published because the "zine" or whatever just kinda disbanded. Can't even remember the name. I honestly think interviews are fun.

Let's start from the top then. You're from Texas right? Did you start out in bands etc before going out on your own thing.

I have lived in Texas since 2015. Some friends convinced me to move here, and so far Austin has been good to me. Good scene, great friends. I am originally from Youngstown, Ohio which is a pretty desolate town in the heart of the rust belt. I played drums and guitar in numerous hardcore and grindcore bands. I started making electronic music because I was sick of keeping bands together. It's too hard to keep everyone on the same page, and logistically never works out (for me at least). I got a copy of ableton live and said "fuck other people, I have a reliable band on my laptop now".

What decade are we talking about here? Was there any bands, shows etc that had an influence on the music you'd eventually make?

I started making electronic music around 2012 I think. At first I was mostly making experimental noise. The noise scene in Cleveland, OH, an hour away from my hometown changed my life and outlook on art and music. Then, I discovered labels like Downwards records (Regis, Samuel Kerridge, Surgeon, Simon Shreeve) that had a huge influence on me and changed my music making direction. Also around that time I was getting into Rhythmic noisy stuff like Alberich, Esplendor geometrico, and other more rhythmic industrial stuff like that. As a former drummer, I love using drums and rhythm in my music.

What's your general approach to the music you make? Are there any themes or ideas you're exploring across the releases on the labels you mentioned.

I feel like I have kind of shaped my sound at this point. If I had to classify myself in a simple way, I would say I make rhythmic industrial techno. My L.I.E.S. release was a bit more polished and less abrasive than what I put out with Chondritic and clan Destine. However, it still very much "sounds like me" I guess. As far as themes, when I am writing for a release, I usually base the theme or mood of what is currently going on in my life. Life changes, heart break, a lot of references to addition and depression for sure. I don't make happy music.

From the outside, it looks like the Austin underground is in a good place. What's your take on this?

Austin has its pros and cons. Right now I would say it is thriving. I have to give a huge shout out to Pat Reed, Erika Voight who I co run "death of affect" booking with, Dev Trently who runs a great freak party "Body Mechanics". Sky Hutchins who runs a monthly called Nite School. Rusty Kelly from breathing problem productions is also IMO the only person booking good heavy shit when those types of touring acts come to town. These people are keeping the underground scene in Austin going. If they all were to leave Austin, I would as well. However, with Austin becoming more expensive and gentrified by the second, who knows how long we can keep this up. I don't know, I guess there will always be a way as long as people really want it.

We met at your show in Manchester. How did the rest of the tour go?

The rest of the UK was amazing! All the shows were beyond my expectations, and people really seemed to care. We have this shitty trend in the states where half the audience is just there to do coke and smoke outside while bands are playing lol. The UK was not like that. Or my experience was not like that at least.

What's your go-to essential item for road survival?
narcotic stimulants if I am being honest haha.

Finally - three releases you've been digging on the stereo
Ramleh "Hole in the heart". Tot Onyx "Senno I" and Urine Cop "Dad Noise".



MINDSEYERECORDS.XYZ

THE DISTRIBUTION NETWORK



Can you run it down from the top as we've never met and interested to hear how you started out in this thing. What's your backstory and what possessed you to join the online retail and label bloodbath in 2023 AD

Thank you for asking. I previously worked in underground radio. My experience growing up finding new music was online (YouTube, blogs etc) and I had always wanted to run/be involved in a label, so building an online mail order and then label just ended up happening. It launched at the end of 2020, the rest is a bit of a blur.

What's your approach to these two operations? From the outside, the releases you stock you can't find anywhere else over here

I think they're intertwined in some ways. Just as the label releases things exclusively - for retail. I don't see the point in stocking things that you can get elsewhere (minus a few exceptions), there's enough of that already.

How are you finding it out there? It's no secret that running a label or distro is no joke.

The support is there but for sure it's tougher this year, the cost of living has got us all.



Don't want to start up a cursed format discussion, but you stock a lot of CD's and I'm curious to get your take here. Vinyl is a joke for expense / time, and tapes are also getting expensive - kinda thinking CD's are the true underground choice?

Ha, I hadn't thought too much about it but I do think you have a point. The best music I'm finding at the minute is burnt onto a CD in someone's room/studio, probably because it's such an easy format and cheaper than anything else? Although vinyl is ridiculous right now, it's not a format I dismiss... new stuff soon.

How do you see the future of labels and distro panning out?

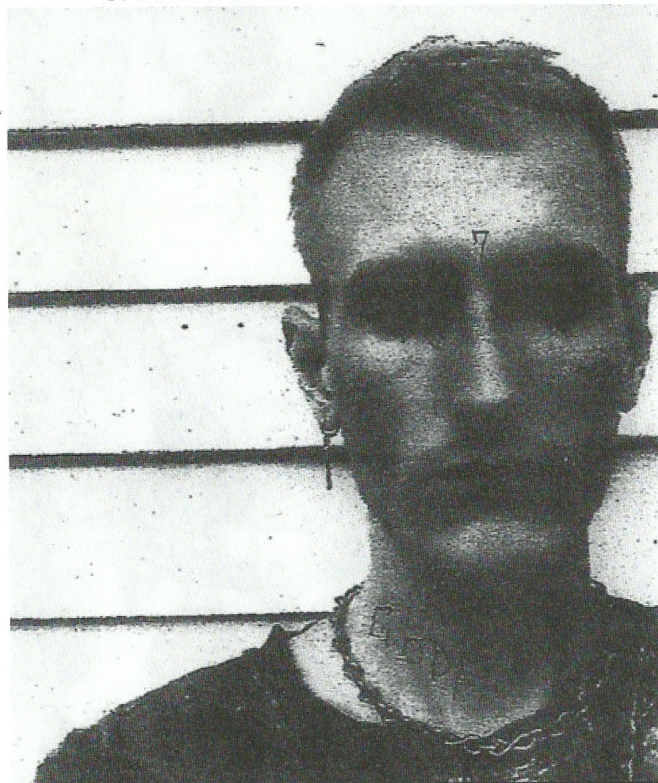
I think the same as always, they'll find a way to operate.

What releases you particularly feeling on the site right now?

All of them! The Verfallen releases are fun at the moment.

DJ SPEEDSICK

SPAHN DIRGE & J-CARD SLUDGE

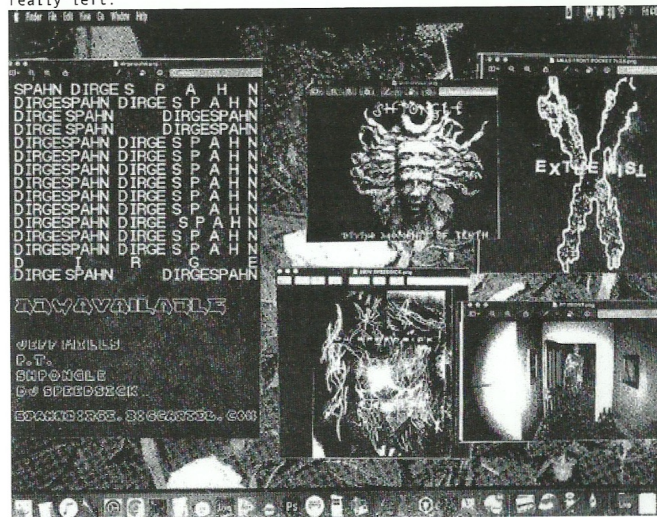


Alright man, what's your day panning out like after I've sucked any joy from your life with this interview?

Haha don't worry man, there's no joy in my life to suck out. Just kidding. I'm just enjoying a day off from my day-job (I work as an A/V technician for an event production company) and working on some commissions and other random little projects; which I— being severely ADHD— am always juggling dozens at once, but that's how you stay busy!

Embryo is interested to know your roots in underground music and artwork. Have you always grown up in Chicago? Let's get down to the behind the scenes action. What got you here?

There's no short answer for this question, but I'm going to try my best haha. I actually grew up in Wisconsin, right about where the Milwaukee suburbs end and things start getting pretty rural. Chicago's only about an hour and a half drive, though, so I was always close. My first exposure to underground music was probably through watching skate videos and hearing stuff on the soundtracks. Also the techgrind/deathcore thing that was going on in metal back in like in '06-'07— like Job For A Cowboy. The Number Twelve Looks Like You, Tony Danza Tapdance Extravaganza, etc.— which was very centric to Myspace at the time. You had a lot of bands breaking through into the mainstream, reaching kids in southeastern Wisconsin like me, but still connected to shit more on the fringes, which me and my friends would come across when we were like 13-14 and clicking around on Myspace looking for the most insane music possible.gh school, and I never really left.



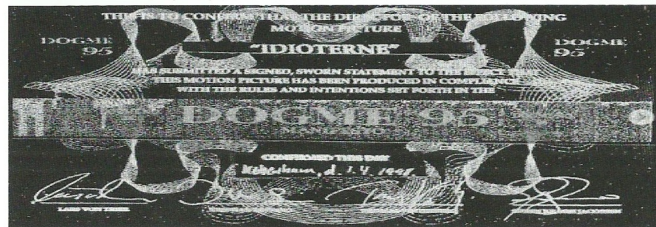
That continued practice over the years eventually lead me to discover the proto-emo/post-hardcore scene in the early/mid-90s and it's crossover into grindcore and hardcore punk, all of which is grounded in a depiction of grassroots, leftist DIY culture and ethos when you're a sheltered 16 year old in the suburbs looking in on it from the internet. I was very inspired to emulate it (though I definitely didn't "get it" quite yet), and convinced my mom to let me throw shows in our basement, which started off with local bands and people I'd meet online touring bands in their early days; some of which are now selling out venues and playing opening slots at stadiums, and convincing them to come play in bumfuck Wisconsin for a bunch of teenagers. Which worked. So that became my world when I was 16-17 and still in hi

Chicago and its roots in music don't need much introduction, but from your perspective, what was it like going out and parting in the city? Was there any club nights or shows that had a particular impression?

Chicago is a place where the climate of the scene changes radically on a regular basis; kind of like the weather here does. There will be a few months to a year or two where things are thriving, it feels like music utopia, and then with no notice it's completely dead as if there was never music here to begin with. Looking back at all I've seen come and go and all the shifts over the last ten years feels like looking back on a lifetime's worth. I spent the first half of my time here being hyper-social and promoting shows, being very in touch, but I've kinda evolved into a semi-reclusive workaholic lately. Having spent so much time either running shows or performing at them, I struggle with being out socially because I feel like I need to be useful or actively doing something, and get anxious about that, so I don't know if I can speak for the current state of things. Though I think I'm going to be making a comeback soon in the booking game.

There's definitely some institutions here that had profound impacts on me though. The big one would be a spot we had here called Club Rectum, which was founded by a group of my friends who'd previously been a part of another multi-level warehouse collective space called Treasure Town/Mortville—which I caught the final months of—and migrated into an old quinceanera hall previously owned by a family member of one of the individuals. The spot was the epicenter for noise, hardcore/grind, and pretty much all extreme music for several years and defined the presence of that in Chicago. As interest in those kinds of music began shifting towards industrial and techno, more events for that stuff started happening there—some of which they let me book—and some of the events that took place during that span of time were legendary in Chicago history to this day.

Another highly formative institution was this space called Rubicon, which was located in the basement of an old funeral home and operated by a somewhat obscured group of individuals who threw a semi-private monthly event called Dance Tutorial. It was crazy; like a medium-sized basement with four fog machines running, no lights but some lasers and strobes, and just blasting techno. There was a chain-link fence between the DJ's and the dancefloor and with all the fog, you never really knew who was playing, which I think was kinda the idea. It was a rotating cast of a few core DJ's who all used different monikers specifically for the party. I started going in like 2015 I think, when it was still pretty young, after one of the DJ's, who worked at a coffee shop I frequented, invited me. This was when I was really deep into noise, but like the whole experience of it; being totally zoned out and overwhelmed by the repetitive sounds while on the floor, the overstimulation of the music paired with the lights and fog, the deviant and almost Satanic cult-like atmosphere of it all; it was extreme and intense and challenging in same ways that drew me to noise and noise shows, but it felt like even more, and I was hooked. And I think the intensity and raw energy I try to channel into my music now traces right back to these early experiences.



What about nowadays? What are the spots to check out away from the well known clubs

Honestly shit is really in a slump right now in terms of spaces to do shows at. There's a massive disparity between the number of DJ's that have emerged basically overnight to the number of people who are willing to put in the labor to facilitate events, establish spaces, and create resources for things to happen here. I really hope that changes. I live at a space that could hypothetically throw parties someday, but it's an undertaking I get pretty stressed out even thinking about so I guess I understand anyone's hesitation, but I'm still really hoping to see a change. Right now the scene is basically surviving off a long running space called the Ballroom Projects, which has been around for several generations of the expansive music scene and is probably the only reliable DIY space there is, especially in the after-hours realm of things.



Any labels or producers coming that we should be checking out?

In Chicago? Man I'm pretty isolated from the scene here and there's probably stuff happening that should be mentioned that I'm not even aware of. But in terms of what's in my orbit, for labels the big one that comes to mind is Amerikan Erektors, run by Omar who many know for his former projects No Dreams and Rectal Hygienics, and being the head honcho at Club Rectum; and a pillar of Chicago underground in general. Reserve Matinee too, which is run by John and Mike who do Forrest Management and some other projects; Tape House USA and Friendly Otter are also sick. Artists and DJ's; my boy Drume, Fuj, N-Word DJ, Wish Fulfillment, DJ Coldsteel, Clay Clarissa, LNR THB, Proxoxie and Jvnebug are two younger heads I've heard recently that are doing cool unique shit too. Some sick bands off the top of my head are Meth, Shrive Up, Repent.

Your art has its own vibe to it. What's your approach to this side of your work? Do you have equipment or techniques which are your go-to?

I'm honestly not totally sure where my head goes when I make art, it's very trance-like and autopilot, acting on compulsion I guess you'd say. I was flat out not a visual artist whatsoever until around 2016, and I think the first attempt I made at making something was the art for my first tape which is kinda where it all began. I was thinking about it recently, and I think a major influence for my art has been my obsession with archival documentation. For as long as I've been interested in underground music, I've spent so much of my life just combing through archival media, like scans of old record jackets and CD's, zines, flyers; just absorbing everything, then later I started getting into it myself and scanning rare or unique music from my collection and other kinds of media, ripping tapes and records, etc. So when I began making music and art and had some control over how it was documented, the archival aesthetic is naturally what I gravitated towards.

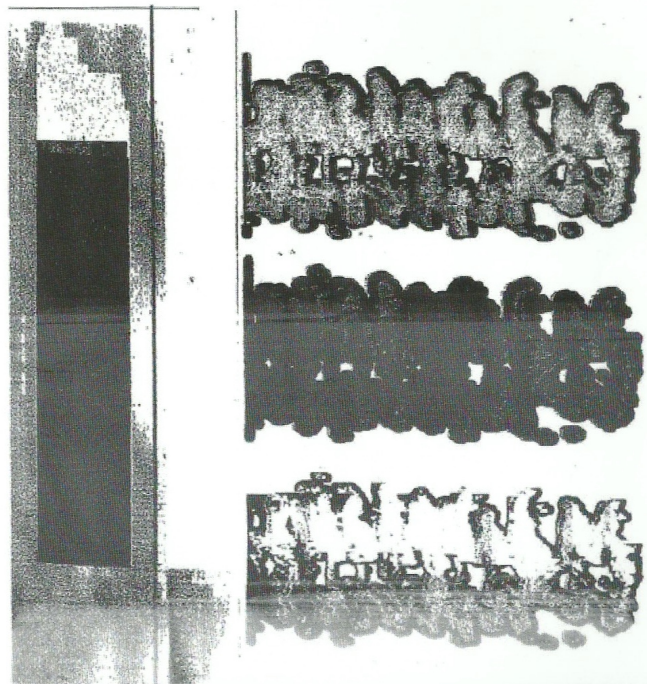
I'm not going to disclose any of my secrets for how I produce the results I get, but yes, my visual art is very much grounded in the particular equipment I use. What I will say is that it involves some very tedious- maybe even obtuse- processes that utilize the unique idiosyncrasies of the equipment I use; misusing and repurposing various functions of theirs, and leaving a lot of factors to be determined by the forces of entropy and just rolling with what I get and seeing what else I can do with it. It's shit you have to be kind of crazy to even bother with, but that's what it takes to achieve the distinct unmistakable look of my art.

Spahn Dirge is your clothing side to your art - is that a fair breakdown? From the band tees and stuff that you do a version of, are there factors you consider before working one of these out?

Yes and no; because on one hand, Spahn Dirge has been jet fueled workout for my practical art/design skills, like when we started out in 2020, I had like rudimentary knowledge of how to use Photoshop at best. I think we're coming up on like 75-80 total designs we've done. I don't think people understand how much art that is and how much work goes into it. In some senses though, it's not "my art" and I don't think of it as my art. My curation and approach to SD is actually very dogmatic; I feel a responsibility to represent the artists how they wanted themselves to be represented. I always prioritize pre-existing designs, but when I do shirts for who either didn't have merchandise or am doing my own version of something, I very exclusively only use imagery lifted from CD booklets, record sleeves, j-cards, posters, and whatnot; exactly as it appears on that media. In a lot of cases when I recreate a design, that's where I end up finding the best/clearest and highest resolution images to recreate something with. I've gone dramatic lengths with some designs though. The Man Is The Bastard one in particular; dear god. All I had was a pretty low fidelity cellphone pic of the original I found on a forum, like with the shirt fabric all warped and not at all a flat canvas.



I asked some of my autistic Sanrio obsessed lady friends about the image on the back of it, which it turns out is somewhat of a mystery because some of the characters depicted don't exist in the known Hello Kitty universe. So I had to sit in front of my computer for what ended up being 8 hours puppet warping and cleaning up the warped image I had into being a flat clean image. And that kind of task is so beyond what I'd believed to be my skill sets, but I made it work, and that shirt was legendary for us and MITB fans.



Is there a design you've been wanting to do but have changed your mind about?

Yeah, constantly, over and over since the beginning lol. There's too many to count honestly. Some stuff's not as cool as I imagined it when I finish a design, or it just feels like it'll flop (which doesn't really matter to me, but obviously if we have something else that'll pop off standing by we're going to prioritize that) or I just straight up forget about something. It's a lot to keep up with.

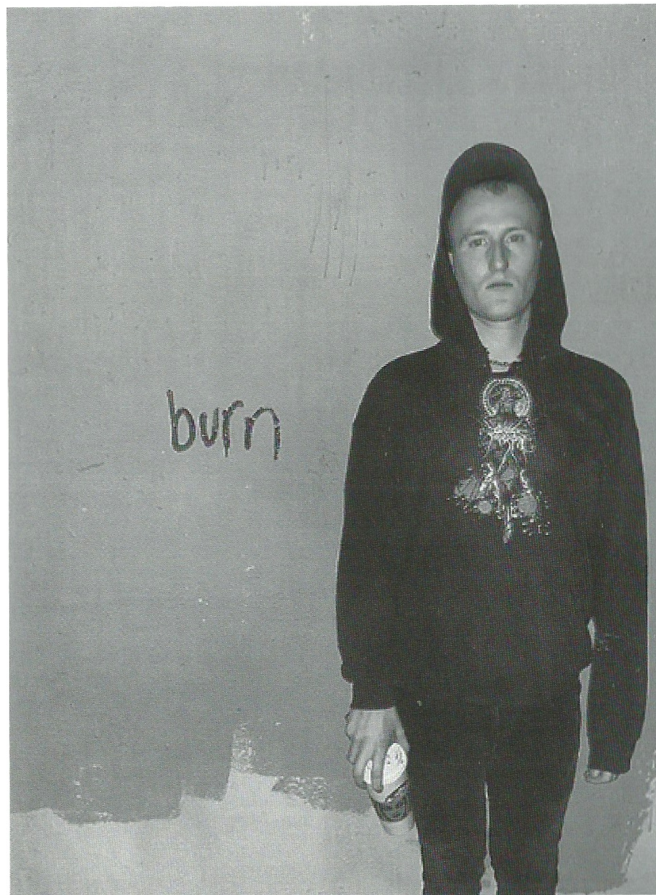
What's your review on the "bootleg" side of tee design? Any beef to get off your chest?

Only beef I have is with anyone acting territorial about the act of reproducing imagery that doesn't even belong to them. Like regardless of how the artistry of an individual manifests in the bootlegging game; we're still all fucking stealing shit, so any competition or buttthurt gatekeeper sentiments are fucking whack in my opinion. Like throwback to when @espionage.vr blocked me when I hit him up about doing a Silent Hill PT collab while he was reply-boying my girlfriend simultaneously. Yeah, fuck you, you fucking tryhard neck beard bitch; if you're reading this, I honestly knew nothing about a bootleg scene even existing when Spahn Dirge started; I just really wanted an old Marilyn Manson shirt that I couldn't afford to pay \$300 for on ebay and talked my buddy Brad, who's an active printmaker and a member at a printmaking co-op, into making me one if I recreated the design, and we decided to sell some to supplement the setup overheads. I'm still pretty disengaged with the whole bootlegging circuit, but I've made friends with a bunch of the heads in it since, like we're all comrades; Justified Arrogance, Schizoid Unit; we like swap or buy each others shirts and rep each other.

All that being said, I can't not be a little critical of anyone who looks in and thinks they see something lucrative and phones in some basic, overplayed, Google Image search picture badly mocked up in Photoshop and runs preorders like they deserve a slice of the cake too. Because let's face it, people are doing that, and I think it's pretty obvious so it doesn't exactly go well for them, but I just have a problem with the disrespect it shows towards the artists they're reducing to a cheap, low commitment cash grab, because I think most of us who do this cannot relate to that sentiment at all and these clowns completely miss the point.

Alongside the art you've been making tracks and releasing tapes for quite a few years now, releasing on Breathing Problem Productions (who we interviewed in Issue #1), BANK among others. What's in the pipe-line and how has your view on 'tape manipulation and nostalgic rave techno' changed since the first release?

Nothing's changed about my perspective on noise music or my creation of it; I just actually got pretty good at making techno so I end up doing that more frequently, especially since I'm still constantly learning when I do it. At the inception of this project, I had been making noise for a few years but had only just barely begun dabbling with electronic music production and knew nothing about it really. The techno/hardcore tracks that were on the earliest tapes were pretty much just me recording myself while experimenting with a drum machine/sampler, like not even thinking of what I was doing as written songs or even demos really; more just like diary entries documenting ideas I was exploring with music at a certain time— and turning point— in my life. I've actually revisited some of these things and material recorded back in these times for an upcoming release, that I'm going to stay quiet about, but I'm very excited to see materialize soon as will you.



Round this out with some tapes, records you've been feeling recently

Nick Jersey "Area", Cel Genesis "Shallow Dream", Viduus "And The Devil Marches With Us", Nebuchadnezzar "Mel Gibson Confirmed Real", Usurp Synapse "A Vile Contamina"



PRIMITIVE KNOT

NORTH-WEST EXIT STRATEGIES



What's up Chris. Your new record 'Exit Strategies' has just been released on Natural Sciences Recs and Deathbed Tapes. What ideas were you trying to get across with this one?

We're a bit fucked aren't we, the humans. With this release I was more focussed on where I wanted to go musically. I hadn't intended recording any new stuff but I got inspired after going to an event and hearing someone use polyrhythms / 2-step / dubstep to create a dense, mysteriously satisfying atmosphere. I know people like the great Justin Broadrick have pioneered this sort of crossover but I had different ideas about how it might work. I think Exit Strategies has also been influenced by my other projects so it's a deep immersion in my scary world haha.

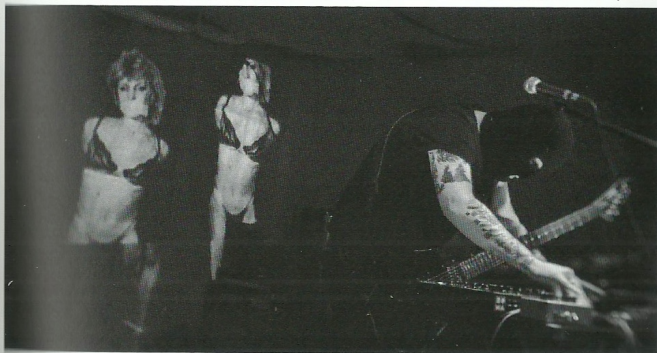
From what we can work out, the record seems to be directly confrontational and attacking the jugular of society at large. Media atrocities, online depravity, mental health. Are we hitting the right notes here? In the eyes of PK, how did things get so messed up?

The current model of western democracy is dying. In practice it's always been a plutocracy but what's different now is that there's no attempt to hide this. It's in plain sight and there's this sense that the corruption is escalating. The massive transferral of public money to private interests feels like a scorched earth policy.

This recent strategy of actively sending out lies has been really effective at paralysing effective criticism - once the lie is out, amplified by media and bots, truth struggles to make itself heard. Then you have the so-called "culture war", which is another tool of distraction, setting up illusory enemies within or scapegoats for hate. These are all effective methods of misdirecting attention away from the real problem.

This is an aside but, isn't it interesting how conspiracy theories have now gone mainstream. It's no longer just the cranks but your mate's dad and your sister who are now true believers. Remember - in conspiracy theory land the absence of evidence counts as evidence (because it's been covered up, natch). Try untangling that.

Another thing that's happening is what J G Ballard prophesied. We're slaves to consumerism. I know I am, even though I try to fight it. Crucially though, we're bored with it and accumulating more stuff doesn't give us the hit we crave. Ballard predicted that the next stage of consumerism would exploit this by focussing on our darker, deep-seated impulses for brutality and hate. When you combine this with a charismatic leader who channels this and uses the techniques above, you have everything you need to radicalise people at a powerful, emotional level. I don't really need to spell it out but, certainly, here in the UK, these are some of the reasons for the mess we're in. Also, it's an idiosyncrasy of the British that they like being told what's best for them by people who went to Eton. What's the solution? Be punk.



You manage to keep your online presence fairly under-wraps, but seem willing to come out of the shadows and use tools like instagram to promote shows etc. Do you see this as a necessary evil for an artist to work in 2023? What would you like changed?

To a degree, online stuff exists in its own bubble. You can have thousands of followers and gushing support, but still find yourself playing to 4 people on a rainy night in Salford. The process of interacting with people on social media can be really inspiring and useful for getting your message out but I think you just need to be realistic about what it can actually do for you. I think you also need to be wary of over-saturation and over-sharing/killing your mystique. I am probably guilty of the former because I release so much stuff through lots of different projects. Whilst I do that because I have no choice but to follow inspiration, there's a risk that people will get FUCKING SICK of you.

I'm interested to hear your root into this thing. Have you always lived around the North West? Give us a quick breakdown, from early bands, going solo etc

I grew up in North Wales. In school I was listening to stuff like Subhumans, Rudimentary Peni and thrash, which was just taking off. My first band was a triumphant failure called Infictor. We played a gig in school. Our cover of Radiation Sickness by Nuclear Assault went down well with the teachers. I relocated to Liverpool to be a student and was in and out of various projects. I've been in Manchester for around 15 years and started doing PK about 7 years ago. I've always done all the recording and playing but I have good friends helping me out with live stuff.

Was there a club night, show or performance that had an impact on what you'd go on to make?

There have been a few. Experiencing a great band/artist is always inspiring isn't it. Seeing Motörhead at Buckley Tiv in '87 comes to mind; also Killing Joke on the Extremities tour in Manchester International 2, with Jaz convincing us we'd all be drafted and packed off to the Gulf War. Uniquely talented true believers are a rare thing and make you want to be a better person or artist.

Manchester is a great musical city for a lot of reasons, but not so much on the industrial / noise side of things. Do you feel out of place in the city? Has it always been this way?

I don't really feel out of place because I've never really been "in place" wherever I've lived. Don't think I've ever been part of a scene, not because I think I'm somehow above it, it just hasn't happened. You just plug away at what you love and hope people will connect with it. There are lots of great venues in Manchester putting on diverse stuff. Always enjoy playing places like The Peer Hat, The White Hotel,

You have a few aliases, with Cromlech perhaps being the most active alongside PK. Why is that and what do you see as the main differences between them?

In the same way that people are complex, with different (often, apparently, contradictory) aspects to their personality, I think most people have eclectic musical tastes. You listen to music that suits your mood or enhances or redirects your mood. Whilst the style changes, I think there's a consistent feel running through PK recordings which would probably be disrupted by an album of, say, dungeon synth atmospherics. To keep that consistency then, I record it under a different project (in the latter case, my Witch Root project). Cromlech is probably closer to PK in feel but it has elements which set it apart. Different projects evolve their own rules and impose their own constraints.



You're playing at the launch of this issue but with a full band which is sick. What can we expect and why the switch up?

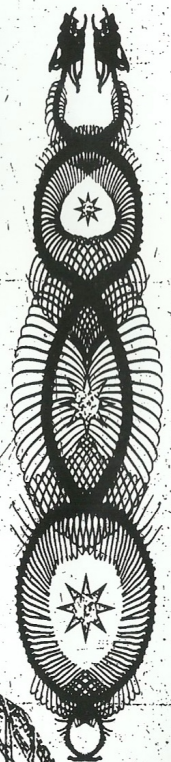
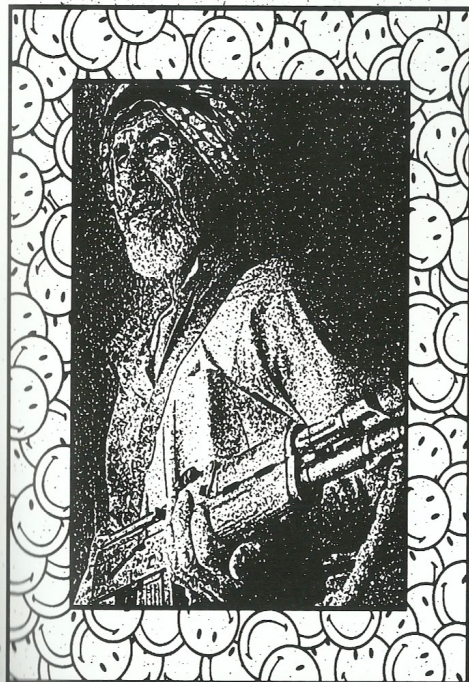
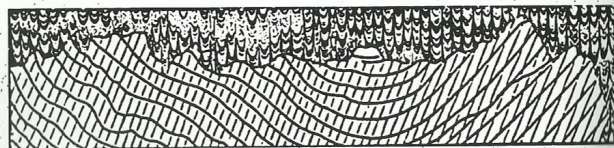
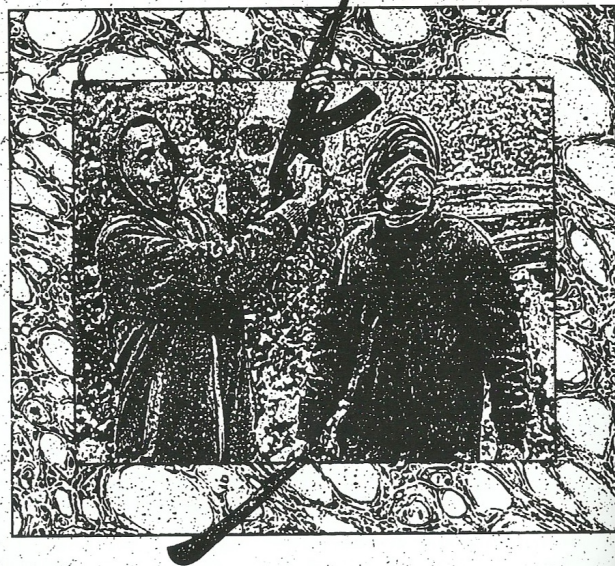
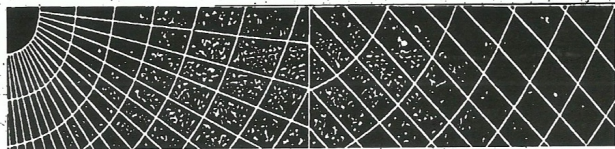
Since the very first live shows I've been lucky to have my good friend Paul (of legendary Manc filth merchants, Jackie O / Jack Reid and the Black Whip) helping me out with additional guitar terror. Subsequently, Chris (The Wyrding Module) has also helped out with live sequencing and sampling. Without them there's no way I could've realised PK live. We've now been joined by Jo on bass (Jackie O, Breaking Colts) whose crushing bass will take your face off. A few rehearsals in and it's sounding like the end of the world. Looking forward to playing live.

Finishing up the way we always do. What records you got on the stereo?

Genocide Organ + Prurient - Carte Blanche;

Frang - Force Fed;

Salford Electronics - Red.



44

NATURAL



SCIENCES

